

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Claims 3, 4, 6, 8 and 20-35 remain active in the application. Of these, Claims 24, 26 and 27 have been allowed. The present amendment rewrites the independent Claims 32 and 34 in dependent form so as to respectively depend from Claims 25 and 28. Claim 24 has been amended to correct a minor typographical error therein.

The rejection of Claims 32-35 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (paragraph 2) is believed to have been rendered moot by the rewriting of Claims 32 and 34 in dependent form. Claims 25 and 28 are thus the sole rejected independent claims in the application.

Claims 25 and 28, together with several of their dependent claims, were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Kono '196 in view of JP '512 and further in view of Kono '372. The Examiner there stated that Kono '196 lacks a nozzle discharge port opening/closing means for opening or closing a discharge port of the nozzle, but alleges that it would have been obvious for those skilled in the art to have provided such an opening/closing means in Kono '196 in view of JP '512. However, the rejection of the claims on this basis is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner has recognized that Kono '196 lacks a nozzle discharge port opening/closing means, and has accordingly cited JP '512 in order to teach the use of this feature in Kono '196. However, JP '512 merely discloses a needle valve 4 located at the discharge end of a screw extruder chamber having a screw 15. Thus, whatever motivation may exist for those skilled in the art to combine Kono '196 with JP '512, JP '512 would at most teach or suggest *locating a needle valve at the outlet of the extruder chamber*, which corresponds to the location of the outlet 37 of the downwardly angled barrel 30 in Kono '196. As such, the resulting structure would **not** have the claimed "nozzle discharge port opening/closing means for opening or closing a discharge port of said nozzle," which nozzle

is connected at the discharge end of a connection member whose second internal channel is “*extending horizontally* from the lower end of the first channel.” Since the barrel 30 of Kono ‘196 does not extend horizontally, an opening/closing valve located at its discharge nozzle 32 would not correspond to the claimed invention. Claims 25 and 28 therefore define over any obvious combination of these references.

Kono ‘372 was cited only for the teaching of features of the dependent claims, and so Applicants respectfully submit that the claims define over any proper combination of any of the above references.

Applicants therefore believe that the present application is in a condition for allowance and respectfully solicit an early Notice of Allowability.

Respectfully submitted,

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